



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

PAROLE BOARD

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RECORD OF DECISION

IN THE MATTER OF

GARY JOHNSON
W94444

TYPE OF HEARING: Initial Hearing

DATE OF HEARING: November 13, 2025

DATE OF DECISION: March 16, 2026

PARTICIPATING BOARD MEMBERS: Edith J. Alexander, Dr. Charlene Bonner, Sarah B. Coughlin, Angelo Gomez Jr., James Kelcourse, Rafael Ortiz

VOTE: Parole is granted to an approved home plan after 6 months in minimum.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY: On May 22, 2009, following a jury trial in Suffolk Superior Court, Gary Johnson was convicted of murder in the first-degree for the death of Mumin Manavoglu. He was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. On that same date, he was found guilty of both possession of a firearm without an FID card, receiving a 4–5-year sentence to run concurrently with his life sentence, and guilty of possession of ammunition without an FID card, receiving a 2-year sentence to run concurrently with his life sentence.

Mr. Johnson became parole eligible following the Supreme Judicial Court's decision in Commonwealth v. Mattis, 493 Mass. 216 (2024), where the court held that sentencing individuals who were ages 18 through 20 at the time of the offense (emerging adults) to life without the possibility of parole is unconstitutional. As a result of the SJC's decision regarding his first-degree murder conviction, Mr. Johnson was re-sentenced to life with the possibility of parole after 15 years.

On November 13, 2025, Mr. Johnson appeared before the Board for an initial hearing. He was represented by Attorney Ryan Schiff. The Board's decision fully incorporates by reference the entire video recording of Mr. Johnson's November 13, 2025, hearing.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE: On November 1, 2007, 18-year-old Gary Johnson shot and killed 47-year-old Mumin Manavoglu in Dorchester. At approximately 9:30 that morning, Mr. Manavoglu was preparing food at the restaurant he owned when he saw Mr. Johnson, who was wearing a face covering, standing on the other side of the counter pointing a gun at him. Mr. Johnson ordered the cashier to open the cash register and empty its contents into a bag. Mr. Johnson took the bag and left the restaurant. Mr. Manavoglu followed and began struggling with Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson fired two shots, striking Mr. Manavoglu once in the face. Mr. Manavoglu died two days later from his injuries.

Mr. Johnson was located hiding behind a shed in the backyard of a home near the scene of the crime. Eyewitnesses identified Mr. Johnson as the person who shot Mr. Manavoglu. Mr. Johnson was taken into custody and interviewed by officers. He later confessed to the murder.

APPLICABLE STANDARD: Parole “[p]ermits shall be granted only if the Board is of the opinion, after consideration of a risk and needs assessment, that there is a reasonable probability that, if the prisoner is released with appropriate conditions and community supervision, the prisoner will live and remain at liberty without violating the law and that release is not incompatible with the welfare of society.” M.G.L. c. 127, § 130. In making this determination, the Board takes into consideration an inmate’s institutional behavior, their participation in available work, educational, and treatment programs during the period of incarceration, and whether risk reduction programs could effectively minimize the inmate’s risk of recidivism. M.G.L. c. 127, § 130. The Board also considers all relevant facts, including the nature of the underlying offense, the age of the inmate at the time of the offense, the criminal record, the institutional record, the inmate’s testimony at the hearing, and the views of the public as expressed at the hearing and/or in written submissions to the Board.

Where a parole candidate was convicted of first-degree murder for a crime committed when he was ages 18 through 20 years old, the Board considers the “unique aspects” of emerging adulthood that distinguish emerging adult offenders from older offenders. Commonwealth v. Mattis, 493 Mass. 216, 238 (2024). Individuals who were emerging adults at the time of the offense must be afforded a “meaningful opportunity to obtain release based on demonstrated maturity and rehabilitation” and the Board evaluates “the circumstances surrounding the commission of the crime, including the age of the offender, together with all relevant information pertaining to the offender’s character and actions during the intervening years since conviction.” Id. (citing Diatchenko v. District Attorney for the Suffolk Dist., 466 Mass. 655, 674 (2013) (Diatchenko I); Miller v. Alabama, 567 U.S. 460, 471 (2012); Graham v. Florida, 560 U.S. 48, 75 (2010)). Since brain development in emerging adulthood is ongoing, the Board also considers the following factors when evaluating parole candidates who committed the underlying offenses as an emerging adult: 1) a lack of impulse control in emotionally arousing situations; 2) an increased likelihood to engage in risk taking behaviors in pursuit of reward; 3) increased susceptibility to peer influence which makes emerging adults more likely to engage in risky behavior; and 4) an emerging adult’s greater capacity for change. See Mattis, 493 Mass. at 225-229.

DECISION OF THE BOARD: Mr. Johnson was before the Board presenting with an understanding of the causative factors of his crime. The Board notes that Mr. Johnson has been program involved, including completing Violence Reduction and Jericho Circle. His last disciplinary report was in 2016, and he has no violence related incidents while incarcerated. He earned his

GED in 2012. He has been consistently employed. The Board considered the forensic evaluation of Dr. Lockwood. The Board also notes Mr. Johnson presents with a strong support system and a re-entry plan to address his need areas. The Board considered the testimony of Mr. Johnson's family in support of parole. The Board considered written submissions from Mr. Manavoglu's friends and family in opposition to parole. The Board concludes by unanimous decision that Gary Johnson has demonstrated a level of rehabilitation that would make his release compatible with the welfare of society.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Approve home plan prior to release; Waive work for 2 weeks; Must be home between 10 PM and 6 AM or at Parole Officer's discretion; Electronic monitoring for 6 months; Supervise for drugs, testing in accordance with Agency policy; Supervise for liquor abstinence, testing in accordance with Agency policy; Report to assigned MA Parole Office on day of release; No contact with victim(s); No contact with victim(s)' family; Must have mental health counseling for adjustment.

I certify that this is the decision and reasons of the Massachusetts Parole Board regarding the above-referenced hearing. Pursuant to G.L. c. 127, § 130, I further certify that all voting Board Members have reviewed the applicant's entire criminal record. This signature does not indicate authorship of the decision.


Angelo Gomez Jr., Chair

March 16, 2026
Date